

COMMUNITY



Tamworth Borough Council

We Are Tamworth - A Cooperative Approach to Building Better Communities

Tamworth Borough Council created We Are Tamworth in response to increasing community tensions after unrest in 2024 and a recognised need to rebuild trust, belonging, and connection. Instead of relying on traditional top-down methods, the council decided to adopt a different approach – listening first and working in equal partnership with local people.

Listening first

The work started with Honest Conversations, organised through the Belong Network and held in community venues, schools, and faith settings. Residents were encouraged to speak openly about their experiences of living in Tamworth, what mattered to them, and what needed to change. These conversations directly influenced the priorities and delivery approach of the We Are Tamworth Building Better Communities strategy.

Community-led action

We Are Tamworth is a living way of working, not just a strategy document. Communities are supported to lead projects, with the council acting as an enabler rather than the owner.



Kaleidoscope of Dreams Festival

Kaleidoscope of Dreams was a festival celebrating inclusion, co-designed by schools, young people and community partners. Hosted at Tamworth Castle Grounds, it united thousands of residents through music, dance, and art, many of whom had not previously participated in borough-wide events. Kaleidoscope of Dreams II – Better Together will take place in July 2026, once again led by our schools and communities.

'The best event Tamworth has ever seen – it brought everyone together.' - Festival attendee



The Unity Shield Project

The Unity Shield project brought together residents from diverse backgrounds through blacksmithing workshops to create a permanent public artwork, which was unveiled on 21 March 2026.

Participants included young people, faith groups, asylum seekers, and individuals living with dementia.

'It gives us a visible place in the town's story.' – workshop participant

The council also introduced a community-led ['We Are Tamworth'](#) crowdfunding model through Spacehive, supporting local organisations to develop and fund their own ideas and helping to stretch public investment further.

7 out of 8 projects have reached their targets, and for every £1 the council invests, the community deliver a further £2.

Alongside these headline initiatives, the programme is supporting a wider pipeline of resident-led projects that build everyday connection: small grants and crowdfunding have enabled local groups to test ideas quickly, learn what works, and scale successful activity. Each project is asked to show how it strengthens relationships between different communities, creates shared spaces or shared experiences, and leaves a practical legacy (skills, partnerships, or assets) that lasts beyond the initial funding.



The council's role

Across all activities, the council has focused on sharing power, building relationships and trusting communities to lead.

'We Are Tamworth shows what's possible when we listen and work as one community.' – Stephen Gabriel, Chief Executive

Impact and learning

This collaborative approach has helped rebuild trust, strengthen relationships across communities and partners, and boost confidence among residents to lead change. It shows how collaborative principles can be put into practice and provides a model that other councils can adapt.

Alignment with CCIN values

We Are Tamworth aligns strongly with the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network values and principles:

- Equal partnership with local people – residents shaped priorities from the outset.
- Co-production – communities co-designed and delivered projects.
- Sharing power – the council acted as an enabler, not a controller.
- Social partnership – schools, VCSE organisations and communities worked together.
- Democratic influence over resources – community-led crowdfunding supported local ideas.
- Inclusion and equality – deliberate engagement with under-represented groups.
- Long-term change – a sustainable way of working, not a short-term programme

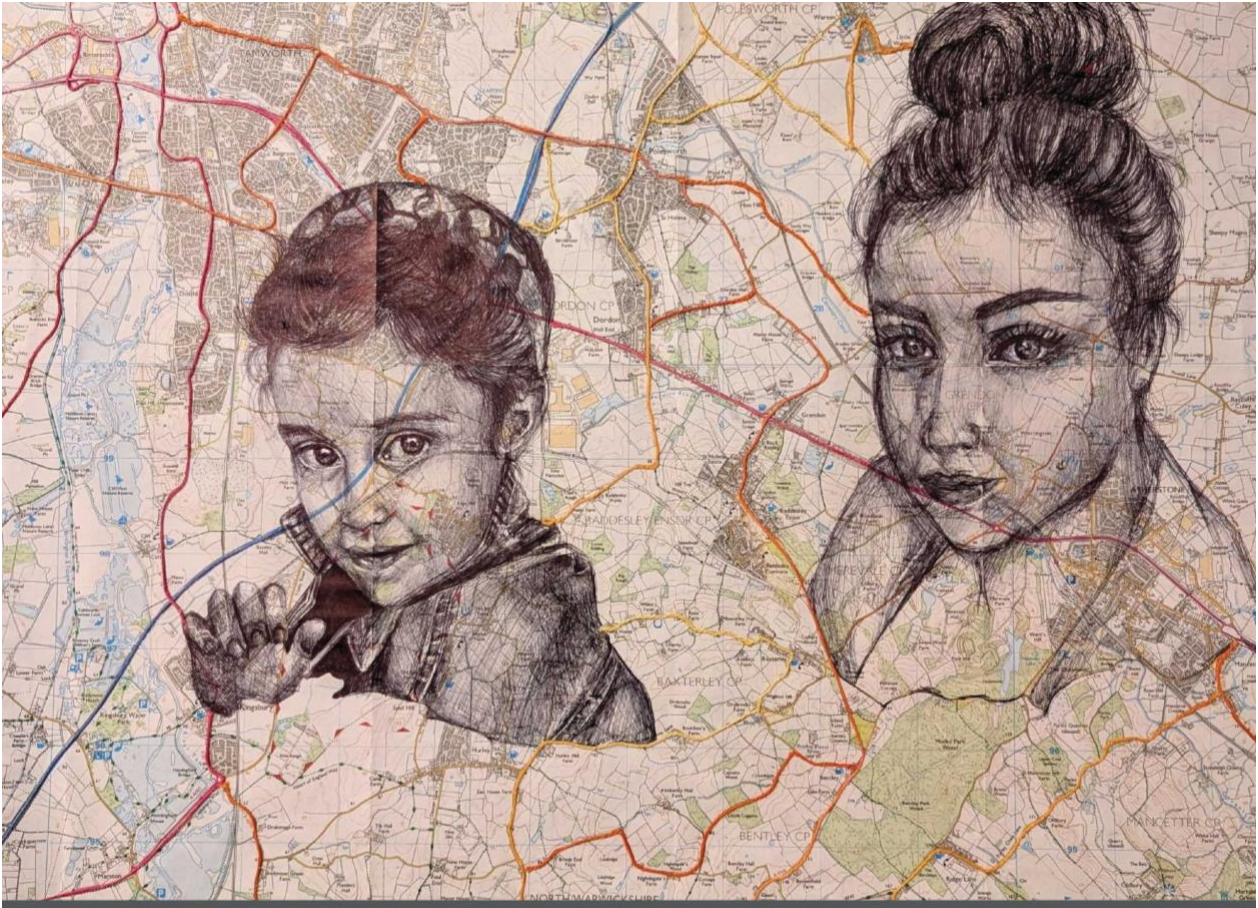


Image created by Paige Jones whilst studying at Landau Forte academy QEMS

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